

# Cattle Drives Still Take Place From Strawberry Into Utah Valley

By KATHRYN D. GROESBECK

Eight sturdy "cowboys" of Utah County were still reliving the experiences of another old-time cattle drive made this fall from Strawberry to the Spanish Fork Canyon corral.

Making the drive were Selby Dixon of Payson, Don Oberg of Genola, Ray Dixon, Don Wride and Ralph Balzly of Benjamin, and George Milner, Allen Cornaby and Harold "Spanky" Hansen of Spanish Fork. Each gave a helping hand at chuck wagon duties along the way.

In past years, Max Depew of Payson has accompanied the drive.

It probably was the biggest drive ever made over the 50-mile trail, for over 1700 cattle with calves were brought out of the Strawberry area for about 50 different owners. Weather was just right and cool enough for easy travel for the animals.

Only the most experienced and best trailers and riders go on this drive, for the cattle that have rustled for themselves all summer can be ornery as sin when they want to be and as fast on their feet as any horse. Just ask anyone of the drivers. He can tell you there is plenty of trouble afoot when a cow breaks from the herd to find her calf.

## Brisk Clip

Generally the drivers spread out as they move along, some closing in near the animals that lead the way, some riding on opposite sides of the herd, and others continuing to trail as they haze the cattle along at a brisk clip, but not so fast as to get the herd overly tired.

Gathering the hundreds of animals to begin the drive is often a mammoth undertaking by itself. But once the move begins, the long line slowly streaks south-westward across Strawberry to the first night's bedding down corral. A second night finds the herd at a second corral, still in the high country. By the third night the men and their valued animals reach the Williams's corral in Indian Canyon, there to rest again. Up at daylight or shortly before, all are soon on the move again towards Thistle the fourth day. On the fifth day the two-mile long string of cattle is a sight to behold as the animals trail down Spanish Fork Canyon to their last bedding down corral.

## Auto Problem

Automobile traffic in the canyon sometimes proves a prob-

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lem for the cowhands. But this particular group of riders handles it by sending out a flagman to direct automobiles away from the herd.

Some travelers find interest in just the herd itself and many stop their cars to take pictures of the big rangy animals trailing along the highway.

As soon as the herd reaches the bedding ground near the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon, the big job is over for the cowhands. The final work is left for the following day when the owners of the cattle, some of them the drivers themselves, cut out their own stock. Some of these men have long taken a part in trailing the cattle out from Strawberry, their day at such times being from just before daylight until dark, when both cattle and men welcome some much needed rest.

## Texas Drives

Though the cattle drives from Strawberry have always held fascination for the Utah County "cowboys," following the trail has been no easier at times than it was in 1867, when the great cattle drives began in Texas. There millions of cattle roamed wild on the open range after the Civil War. But once the half-breed trader named Jesse Chisholm had marked the way north along an old Indian trail, twenty years were to see the longhorns being gathered in to follow deep wagon ruts from Texas to Kansas, to the Dakotas and Montana, and even to Utah.

Then, almost suddenly, the railroads brought an end to the great drives. Besides, "bob-wire" so criss-crossed the range in time that the big drives were impossible. Yet during the great trail drive period, more than 10 million head of cattle passed over the big trails from Texas to market with Dodge City and Abilene at one end of the trail and San Antonio and Fort Worth on the other, they being, of course, the best known of the cattle towns.

These centers were often places of unrestrained delight and men like Wild Bill Hickok, Luke Short, and John Wesley Hardin began to make history, with gunfighting and rustlers part of the early drama.

## Hit the Trail

When Texas trail crews reached market towns, they made their presence felt, got rid of their wages in a glorious style, and then hit the trail

again for a long nine-hundred-mile ride back.

Nothing like those old time trail drives from Texas to Kansas can ever occur again.

But the cowhand who joins the drive over the mountains from Strawberry to the Spanish Fork corral grounds enjoys his work, looks forward to it with pleasure; thrills at the sight

of a two-mile long string of cattle coming down the canyon highway; minds not his turn at the chuck wagon nor the chill of the night air in camp nor the trouble that comes when a cow gets "spooked" and makes a break. And he resolves, that, come next year, he will be on hand ready to make another drive.

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CATTLE STILL TRAIL down Spanish Fork Canyon from Strawberry each fall, although nothing like the cattle drives of old.

